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Bible Study in College.

YALE UNIVERSITY.

By PROFESSOR F. K. SANDERS, PH.D.

Yale University without question is a center of much Bible study. This is done under three general lines of organization: the undergraduate work; the work in the graduate department for those who are planning to become teachers themselves; and the work which is carried on through the Young Men's Christian Association.

The object of the undergraduate courses is practical. The main course is one on Biblical History and Literature. It aims to cover the whole Bible—Old and New Testament—in two years, treating the biblical material in the light of contemporary history and customs and ideas. This course is rather an historical course than one devoted to literary distinctions, but the latter element is made much of. The work is guided by the controlling purpose of bringing out the gradual upbuilding of Hebrew civilization, the gradual development of its religious character, and the connections between the world which is then described and the present.

At Yale it is also intended that there shall each year be offered several subsidiary courses which lay emphasis on certain biblical details. Next year, for instance, along with the first half of the main course there will be offered a course for one hour a week through the year on the Minor Prophets,—a course inviting close literary study. At the same time will be offered a course which bears on Introduction. It is entitled the History of the English Bible, and treats of the gradual growth of the Bible from its earliest Hebrew forms to its embodiment in the Revised Version. This course involves a discussion of the versions of the Bible, the canon, the work of the Massoretes, the differences between the form of the earliest Hebrew writings and the present, and so on. These two subsidiary courses make fewer demands on the student than the main course. They attract the attention of a fair number of students. The New Testament has also subsidiary courses,—one each year on the teachings of Christ and of Paul alternately, besides the close study of some book of the New Testament from the original. Corresponding courses to the above are given every alternate year, thus enabling a man to have a wide choice of helpful electives during his junior and senior years. At Yale the lower classmen cannot choose Biblical Literature.

In the graduate department a seminar is maintained which devotes regular attention to various biblical problems. The students go to the Bible and

do thoroughly original work, which is given as much variety as time permits. For graduate men many courses are offered of the department of Semitic languages, which are of greater or less interest to those who are preparing themselves to teach biblical literature.

The work of the Young Men's Christian Association at Yale is very remarkable. It does not in any respect run parallel to the work of the biblical department; for the association work has as its sole object the development of spiritual grasp of the biblical material itself, an incidental purpose in the work of the biblical department. It is believed that a fair and square study of the biblical material cannot help promoting that effect, but the class-room is not the place for emphasizing it. Each college class has a specific course to which its members are urged to give attention in each one of their college years: the freshmen take up the Life of Christ: the second year, the Parables of Christ are studied; the third year, the Miracles; the fourth year the Life of Paul. In these Bible classes some 150-200 men enroll themselves. There are also training classes maintained, the statistics of which cannot for obvious reasons be given.

Yale has at present three instructors giving more or less of their time to the work of biblical literature, President Dwight, Professor Sanders, and Dr. Creelman. They offer sixteen courses, aggregating twenty-eight hours per week. The aggregate number who are enrolled in these classes for the current year amounts to about 300, being taken exclusively from the junior and senior classes. There is no question but that the work at Yale is an entire success. The department largely increases its hold upon the students each year and has already taken a fairly prominent position. It draws to a fair degree upon the students who attend the divinity school of the University, but inasmuch as this work under the present organization must be entirely extra, I do not make much of it in this report. Despite the efficient services cordially rendered by Professors Curtis and Porter and others of the divinity school, whose work is considerably parallel to that of the biblical department, we need a full Semitic professor. It would then be possible to make the opportunities offered to graduate men far greater than at present.